

## A TRAGIC LESLIE CARTER.

FULL OF SOUND AND FURY SIGNIFYING NOTHING.

A Harmonious and Splendid Production. Most Able Stage Manager. Which Crushes the Dramatic Narrative Into Operatic Pulp—Tyronne Power's Part.

According to schedule, great things were to have come off last night at "Adrea." Mrs. Leslie Carter, already famed all the length and breadth of Broadway as the American Bernhardt, emerged as something even more than that. As for Tyronne Power, the world was to suffer a shock if he appeared anything less than the Shakespeare of Forty-second street.

A large and luxurious audience gathered from the outskirts and altitudes of which come all the familiar signs of a typical Belasco success. It is possible that by this noon common report will have it that Duse and Wagner can be seen at the Belasco Theatre for the price of a single admission. For those whose names are Thomas may be permitted to doubt most of this.

He it said at the outset that Mr. Belasco has again shown himself incontestably the greatest stage manager, the most potent magician of all the harmonious variety and color, the rich depth and softness of atmosphere, that the American stage has ever known. Each of the five scenes last night was a poetic creation, and they all blended together to leave the visual senses all of a purr with their glowing fervor. Only in one other theatre in the world has such whyness of the footlights been witnessed—Troy's His Majesty's Theatre in London.

This means a great deal on Broadway. For our playing public is not yet on a sufficient level of cultivation and refinement to distinguish between a pretty play and a good one, beautiful clothes and beautiful spirit. But for all that, the effects in which Mr. Belasco excels are external, never touching the heart of the artistic drama.

The making of the omelet dramatic requires the breaking of dramatic eggs, and a whole Easter of dramatic shells is to furnish forth the food of the spirit. As scene after scene moved across the view in gorgeous pageant and entranced succeeded entranced, some of them lasting more than half an hour by the watch, it became increasingly evident that the play was not the thing. It was a tale told by Mr. Belasco, full of the Belasco sound and fury—and, as usual, signifying nothing.

The subject that of a soldier who, to further his ambition, marries a pathetically blind woman whom he loves to a loathsome court-jester involves passions so cynically base and a fate so pitifully sordid as to be redemptible only by a corresponding truth and beauty of treatment. The soul of the greatest poet would have been taxed to the utmost to invest it with the least shadow of intelligent interest. Last night the weight of that ponderously magnificent production sat on it like an incubus, strangled all possibility of life out of it and reduced it to the inert, colorless pulp of an opera book bereft of the music.

It had not even the violent hysterics, the cry of sheer physical agony, that made "The Barber of Seville" a play to be feared by the timid. It was a play to be feared by the timid.

And that is one reason why Mrs. Carter, instead of rising to heights she has as yet not scaled, sank below her own rather low level. In "Adrea" she showed power, great power, in the rough. But there her efforts were backed up by what was after all a real tragedy.

As long as Mr. Belasco was credited with the authorship of it, there was hope that he might yet furnish her with a vehicle capable of still further developing her powers.

But when Regina lately produced the French original, it was seen that instead of bettering his original, Mr. Belasco had degraded it. Small hope is left that this crudely powerful woman—American this, that, or whatever she may be called—will ever amount to anything more than her own account. In the first act, where she appeared as a young and beautiful princess blind almost from birth, she made an intelligent effort to embody ingenious sweetness and pathos.

The character was conceived on the plan of D'Annunzio's Anna in "The Dead City." Mrs. Carter, however, was not to be persuaded, perhaps that she is the American Duse. It was the most convincing moment of the play. But there was a quality about it, a quality of the American Duse, that was not to be missed. It was a quality of the American Duse, that was not to be missed.

Then came the moment when she realized how badly she had been tricked by the man she loved, and who she had allowed to love her, and launched forth on a mission of revenge. She mounted to the Tower of Forgetfulness, and there, in the absence of all pretence, she showed her true self. She was administered extreme unction by the high priest in the form of a cup of cold water. By all this she was to be dead, and she should have been dead as a drowned rat at the end of the second act. But no thought of that had Mr. Belasco. The rest of the play was a series of scenes in which she lived, and lived to face crisis after crisis of empty fury.

By the mystical law of the mythical land it was so arranged that upon the recovery of her sight she should mount the throne. The fact was stated in a Latin inscription on the curtain, which was being translated on the programme for the benefit of those who had left behind their Latin in the crude slang of the profession known as "muting."

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## den in the wings. Decidedly, much happens in "Adrea."

The part of the dastardly lover was taken by Charles S. Brown, son of Tyronne Power, lent his vigorously husky voice and picturesque stature to the part of Adrea's faithful barbarian lover.

J. Harry Benrimo was the jester who was pained off to the blind princess as her lover, only to be slammed to the floor of Mr. Belasco's theatre on being discovered, as if he had been Humpty Dumpty from the syndicate show across the way.

All these actors are men of mark, but had little chance to make their mark last night. The only one to gain new laurels was Edith Crane, who lent "real personal charm and no little authority to the part of the lady villain, Adrea's sister, Isolda. It should not be omitted that for once Mr. Belasco has written a play without a bedstead-racoon, Japanese or four poster. That was something.

## "MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S BOOTS"

Another Triumph For Augustus Thomas in a Thoroughly Amusing Comedy.

When Augustus Thomas was called on to accept the applause of the audience which had witnessed the first production of his new comedy "Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots" he declared that the proprietors of hotels and restaurants advertised in the past by dramatist. In New York had not been of profit at their exploitation had been accomplished and for the most part, he turned to sympathy in the house that the founders of that school of medicine would prove more workable. To relieve the rigidity of the medical end of his play Mr. Thomas had woven with it a web based on woman's inalienable right to do right and then lie about it. Mr. Thomas combined the two ideas successfully and "Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots" will take a place beside the other dramatic successes he has concocted.

The story of the play hinges on the mental derangement of Richard Anselme, due to a blow struck by his schoolmate, Walter Corbin. Anselme becomes a rascal and enters upon a course of dissipation. Corbin is engaged to Anselme's sister, but Anselme, in need of money, convinces Howard Leffingwell, a friend of Corbin's, to carry out his plot to place Mrs. Leffingwell's boots on the window sill of Corbin's room in a Bar Harbor hotel. The comedy is that Mrs. Leffingwell gives Anselme much money and Mrs. Leffingwell and Corbin agree never to meet again.

The play has to do with their meeting by accident at the Laremont home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bonner, who plan a dinner for ten on the night of the snowstorm "since Corbin died." The guests are kept from the dinner, but Mrs. Anselme, Corbin and Dr. and Mrs. Ramsey are on hand. Dr. Ramsey cures his malady by osteopathic manipulation and the necessary explanations are made.

The comedy of much confusion makes some parts of the first act drag at times, but its climax is excellent, and the second and third acts are full of action throughout.

The cast, presenting the comedy, was selected with unusual skill and discrimination, and in each character it is sufficient and satisfying. Ernest Rutherford as a butler and Miss Josephine as a maid are particularly good. Miss Margaret Hingston as Mrs. Leffingwell plays with grace and skill, and Miss Fay Davis invests the attractive part of Mabel Anselme with much humor and charm. Vincent Serrano is Anselme, playing well a difficult part. The others in the cast are Dorothy Hammond, Mrs. A. A. Adams, John Saville, Louise Payne, William Courtenay, M. J. Gallagher, J. H. Barnes, Joseph Wilson and Del De Louis.

There is much business in the comedy which besides being amusing, is true to life, such as the telephone scenes in the first act and the delivery of the ice cream at eleven o'clock in the morning. Mr. Thomas made a Thomas speech. He looked happy. He had every reason to, for he has again scored with a bright, clean and thoroughly amusing comedy.

## NEW CIRCUS IN THE FIELD.

Thompson &amp; Dundy to Run It—They Say They'll Live Up to the Old Style.

Thompson & Dundy of Luna Park announced yesterday that on May 1 they will put a 100 car circus on the road. For the first season, at least, the circus will act as a certain raiser for the Hippodrome which the amusement people are putting up at Sixth avenue and Forty-third street, exhibiting ring, acrobatic and electric light specialties that the Hippodrome will have when it opens.

Frederick McClellan, agent for the firm, has been in Europe for several weeks buying contracts for performers. Thompson & Dundy signed contracts yesterday for the building of cars, wagons and paraphernalia. The hiring of the 600 employees also began.

Fred Thompson, head of the firm, has some ideas on the circus business. He believes he can live it up to a bit. "The height of modernity," he said, "is to act after act of acrobatics and muscle stunts make people weary. It has made no improvement for twenty years. The mechanical sensations so thrillingly advertised are not half so dangerous as circus people, which was to make the circus. There is constant danger of fire on account of the naphtha flares.

"Circuses nowadays are so close together that they divide up the territory. Trust style, advertise in the newspapers as little as possible, cheapen their performances whenever they feel like it, change with the times, and they live. The circus is a game. Most people want to see a circus so badly that they will stand for any old bunco, if it is not right."

"I feel that the time has come for a square deal to the public in the circus business. We will put in a system of electric lighting, we will fight with the smelly, smoky, dangerous flares. We will cut out the deadly old acts, and give folks a few stunts that will make a circus a circus. We will give the people a square deal to give New York."

When the Forepaugh & Sells Bros. circus sold out to the new circus, the representative of Thompson & Dundy was at Columbus, Ohio, but made no bid.

## A GREAT MAGDA IN GERMANY.

Mme. Barsene's Impersonation Sets the Irving Place Wild With Enthusiasm.

The Irving Place Theatre rang last night as perhaps never before with the plaudits that a crowded house gave to Mme. Agathe Barsene, the Viennese actress in "Sisters," known in English as "Magda."

A Rejane speaking German, said some; a Rejane speaking English, said others. Never evoked such enthusiasm. Old patrons of the Irving Place, who have scarcely missed a performance since that theatre opened, shouted themselves hoarse, shook hands with each other, and vowed in German, guttural with emotion, that never before had they seen such a Magda or such acting.

The story is well known. It tells of a young woman whom an angry father drove forth, and who, after twelve years of toil and suffering, comes back a prima donna, with her parrot and her ways. Her father upon discovering what her past life has been, wanders about her with the pistol he had ready for the man who seduced her, but, stricken with a malady, the old man dies without committing murder.

Utto Othberg as von Keller, the seducer; Paul Hagermann as the Priest and Heinrich Marlow as Schwartz, Magda's father, were also much applauded.

Mme. Barsene comes from the same Rumanian village which is the home of Mme. Terina. She received a whole conservatory of flowers.

## WAGNER'S NOBLEST DRAMA.

"TRISTAN UND ISOLDE" THE FIRST TIME THIS SEASON.

Knot Sings Tristan in a Musical Style and Gives a Dignified Impersonation—Nordica Apparently Tired, but Her Isolda a Splendid Achievement.

It was pretty clearly demonstrated at the Metropolitan Opera House last night that the great popularity of Italian opera, as expounded chiefly by the clarion-voiced Caruso, has not quite driven the Wagner drama out of mind. "Tristan und Isolda" was sung for the first time this season and the auditorium was crowded. It was a splendid audience, and it paid the tribute of intense enthusiasm to a performance which was filled with earnestness and devotion, if not with the most successful achievement.

It was one of those performances such as we used to have in the days of German opera under Mr. Stanton, when the true Wagnerian spirit was projected into the auditorium and trusted to supply the place of perfect singing and acting. Let not this be misconstrued. There was singing of a higher quality in last night's performance than there was in most of the early presentations of "Tristan und Isolda," but the feeling of the interpretation was unquestionably greater than the expression.

Several causes combined to bring about this result. In the first place, Mme. Nordica, the Isolda, was not at her best. She was palpably tired and sang with effort. This caused her to chop some of her phrases, but it brought about other and more excellent results, for in certain tonal climaxes, as in the rage of the first act, she sang with such resolute energy that she amazed her hearers.

It may have been due to her weariness, too, that she slipped from the pitch on one or two occasions and also that in one place she seemed momentarily uncertain in her memory. But a lapse of memory will happen once in a while to the most experienced singer or actor in a part long familiar. In spite of these minor mistakes, Mme. Nordica presented once again a notable impersonation of Isolda. Her study of the rôle has always been marked by intelligence and sympathetic insight. It was not lacking in these vital qualities last night.

It is not likely that many persons expected a heroic Tristan in Heinrich Knot. This tenor has quite enough Wagnerian real estate and his tone has dramatic quality. Furthermore, he is not devoid of temperament. But his characteristics are lyric rather than tragic. It was therefore to be expected that he would sing the music of Tristan with a good legato, for which it was not so much a song as a recitation, which is required to send it home to every hearer's heart.

Expectations were fulfilled, but Mr. Knot imported to the rôle a fine dignity and solidity which were not in the anticipations of his friends. Not a great or imposing Tristan, this, not altogether the ecstatic lover and dream haunted wreck of Wagner's marvellous vision; but a nobly melancholy figure, a victim of fate set apart for a wayward son who, to get possession of his father's throne, had to slay him.

Suitable companions for the protagonists of the drama were found in their two associates, Miss Walker as Brangäne, and Mr. Van Roy as Kurwenal. These are impersonations already well known to the public, and hence it remains only to call special attention to the tonal opulence of Miss Walker's delivery of her music. Mr. Bias was the King Mark and Mr. Muhlmann the Meid.

Alfred Hertz conducted with plenty of warmth, but there was occasion when he was somewhat generous with his sound. The orchestra played with zeal and artistic care, and some of its achievements, such as the accompaniment of "Einen jenen," were uncommonly beautiful. The vocalists, however, were very tamely played.

## THE MADISON SQUARE TO OPEN.

Walter N. Lawrence Gets the Old Playhouse—It Has Been Remodelled.

The Madison Square Theatre is to be reopened again. Walter N. Lawrence obtained possession of the house yesterday, and after a brief stay in the city, he will return to New York to get the theatre ready for the season.

The theatre was closed nearly a year ago, when the fire and building authorities began to get busy with the local playhouses after the fire in Chicago. The Shuberts then controlled the house. No one wanted it until it was put in first class shape. This was done recently, and as soon as the repairs were made, several managers bid for it. Lawrence takes possession on Feb. 1.

He does not yet know what the opening attraction will be. To assume the management of the theatre, Lawrence resigned his post of general manager for James K. Hackett. He was for many years Daniel Frohman's aid at the old Lyceum.

Two hundred members of the Seventh Regiment attended Fields Theatre last night and saw "It Happened in Nardland." Henry B. Harris is sick at his home, 1 West Sixty-ninth street. He went to St. Louis to start the rehearsal of "Strongheart" and was taken ill there. He has a bad attack of malaria fever.

Following Edward Terry at the Princess in the early spring will come the "Who Goes There" production of "Who Goes There," a three act play by H. A. Lu Souchet.

Van Goyl, composer of the music for "The Duet" of Dantz, will give a concert orchestra at Daly's at the opening performance on Monday.

Frank Hatch, who staged the burlesque of "The College Widow" for Joseph M. Weber, has been engaged to produce "The Fighting Parson," the novel melodrama offering to be seen at Proctor's on Jan. 23.

## PUBLICATIONS.

On JANUARY 14th we publish the first big novel of 1905, "The Clansman," by Thomas Dixon, Jr., with characteristic pictures by Keller. A story of the Ku Klux Klan. \$1.50.

Also, the first number of a beautiful periodical, "The Garden Magazine," 10 cents. \$1 a year.

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